United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ UNOMSA mandate should be expanded to included observation of South Africa's elections next April, Secretary-General says in report to Security Council; United Nations would provide some 1,800 observers, bringing number of foreign observers to over 5,000.

+ Chairman of Special Committee against Apartheid warns that violence, political intolerance and long unfulfilled expectations pose great danger to peace process in South Africa.

+ Representatives of Croat and Serb authorities in Croatia agree to extension of Christmas Truce Agreement; also agree to further confidence-building measures and negotiations on General Cease-Fire Agreement.

+ Donor countries to meet in Nairobi, Kenya, on 25 and 26 January to discuss speedy rehabilitation of selected regions in Somalia where peace and stability prevail.

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The mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa (UNOMSA) should be expanded to included observation of next April's elections, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a report on South Africa dated 10 January, he said UNOMSA would have a significant role not only in assessing the freedom and fairness of the elections, but in monitoring each stage of the process. He stressed that the Mission, based on its long-term activities, would be "uniquely capable" of evaluating the extent to which the elections truly reflected the will of the South African people.

The Secretary-General said UNOMSA would observe the actions of the Independent Electoral Commission and the freedom of organization and expression during the electoral campaign. It would monitor the compliance of the security forces with relevant laws and verify that voting was free of intimidation and secret and that the vote count was secure. UNOMSA would also coordinate the activities of observers from international organizations and foreign Governments.

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The United Nations would provide some 1,800 observers, according to the report. Along with observers from the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the European Union, the Commonwealth and individual States, they would form a core group of almost 3,000 observers. The total number of international observers, including those representing foreign non-governmental organizations and other groups, would probably exceed 5,000. Mobile teams of observers would cover polling stations in areas with low expectations of violence, while there would be an observer posted in each polling station in areas with a history of violence.

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Violence, political intolerance and long unfulfilled expectations still posed great danger to the peace process in South Africa, the Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid, Ibrahim Gambari (Nigeria), said this morning at the Committee's first meeting of 1994.

Mr. Gambari, re-elected for another one-year term as Chairman, warned that orchestrated political violence aimed at frustrating the peaceful transition to a non-racial democracy could escalate, making a successful outcome of the elections impossible. He was concerned at the continuing refusal by the Conservative Party and the Inkatha Freedom Party to participate in the multi-party negotiations and perhaps in the April elections. He appealed to those parties to reconsider their decisions in the interests of the entire country.

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Representatives of the Croat and Serb authorities in Croatia today agreed to an extension of their Christmas Truce Agreement, at a meeting mediated by the Major General MacInnis, the Acting Force Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). The agreement also includes provision for further confidence-building measures and a continuation of the negotiations on the General Cease-Fire Agreement between the two sides.

Since the Christmas Truce came into effect shortly before Christmas, the number of cease-fire violations in the United Nations Protected Areas (UNPAs) has declined to the lowest level since the establishment of the UNPAs. According to a United Nations spokesman, both the Croat and Serb sides at today's meeting confirmed their desire to bring the number of violations down to zero. Further discussions on the issues involved are to held under the auspices of UNPROFOR Force Commander, General Jean Cot.

Meanwhile, there was fierce fighting in several locations in Bosnia and Herzegovina this week, and the situation in Sarajevo was described by UNPROFOR as "highly unstable." Only 16 humanitarian flights have reached the city as a result of Serb shelling of the airport, and five French soldiers were wounded there earlier in the week.

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Representatives of donor countries will meet in Nairobi, Kenya, on 25 and 26 January to consider a quick start to the rehabilitation of selected Somali regions which meet conditions set out at last month's Fourth Humanitarian Conference on Somalia, according to a United Nations spokesman. A declaration adopted at the Conference said that aid would be directed to areas where there was peace and stability.

As part of the preparatory work for the upcoming meeting, Robin Kinloch, Coordinator of Humanitarian Affairs for the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II), yesterday chaired the second of a series of meetings between donors, UNOSOM II, United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations in Nairobi. The meetings are aimed at developing a consensus regarding the donor approach to the Humanitarian Division's plan of action for Somalia.

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